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Mike Hale -- UM high jumper

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MIKE HALE--UM
HIGH JUMPER

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by Lee Urbaniak

MISSOULA.....

In a sport dominated by taller men Mike Hale does pretty well. Standing only 5-9½, Hale easily cleared 6-10 to take the high jump competition at last Saturday's Montana Invitational track meet.

The effort netted the University of Montana sophomore school and meet records, and, more importantly, a trip to the NCAA track and field championships in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

In coming out of an early season slump, Hale narrowly missed on three attempts at the seven-foot barrier. The Missoula product did poorly at Montana's first outdoor team appearance in Spokane two weeks earlier. He failed to clear 6-4 in that meet.

Jumping for only four years, Hale has rocketed into prominence as a potential world class high jumper.

He took up jumping in his junior year at Missoula Sentinel, and as a senior recorded one of the nation's top prep leaps. The slender, fosbury-style jumper cleared 6-8. In his first year of college competition, Hale placed second in the Big Sky Championships at 6-7. His 6-10 effort establishes him as the favorite in his speciality at this May's conference meet.

UM coach Harley Lewis says, "Mike has the spring in his legs to be a seven-foot high jumper. He did not miss seven feet by very much Saturday. His 6-3 effort at Spokane is just one of those things that happen. He had a bad day."

"Right now I'm ahead of last year, but my start was kind of slow. I want to get consistent at 6-10. I feel my best shot at seven feet will be in the home meet against Utah State and Washington State. I have trouble getting used to different fields," Hale comments.

Hale is hoping to attain his goal of seven feet and develop a consistency that would enable him to finish high at the National meet. Oregon State's Tom Woods captured the NCAA title with a jump of 7-3¼ last year.